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18 September 1979

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MEMORANDUM FOR:

NFAC Plans and Programs Staff

SUBJECT : Future Challenges Facing OIA

1. As you requested, this memo addresses several challenges OIA expects to face over the next two or three years. They include both major substantive intelligence topics as well as technological imagery-related developments.

2. Intelligence Topics

a. Third World forces military analysis is expected to be the major area of concern. Within our current resource limitations, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to provide NFAC with the type of thorough -- yet highly timely -- analysis of crisis spots throughout the world. This situation is exemplified by the recent events in Cuba, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Rhodesia, Angola, and Yemen.

b. Conventional arms production and arms transfers will be a topic of considerable interest requiring more resources than currently allotted. The Soviet production and recent export of the new T-72 tank and other modern armaments to Middle East countries and their impact on the balance of power in that area is an example of the type of problem we anticipate.

c. Energy resources and their development will be an area of expanding importance. We must develop analytical expertise and techniques to more fully utilize imagery in these areas -- particularly oil and gas reserves, field exploration and production, transportation, and refining. We also expect increased work on alternate energy sources -- coal, geothermal, nuclear, etc. -- and their worldwide economic impact.

d. Our understanding of military RDT&E and production -- particularly Soviet -- will require a broader base of information than currently exists. We must develop better insight to the organization structure, facility base, and production practices of weapons systems.

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3. Technological Developments

a. New imaging systems and advancements to current systems will necessitate that OIA devote some resources to training, evaluations, and participation in Community studies. Attention to these necessary areas will, of course, divert some resources from our primary mission of imagery analysis.

b. Budgetary constraints are expected to impact adversely upon our attempts to continue development of advanced analytical equipment to keep pace with imaging systems improvements. We are rapidly approaching the limits of current technology in conventional analytical equipment. We will be challenged to develop advanced equipment without significant increases in funding.

4. This memo is classified TOP SECRET ☐ in its entirety.

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Chief, Technical Staff
Imagery Analysis

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